

## [Clovis First Newsboy]

Interview 2nd

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Mrs. Belle Kilgore

718 Wallace Street

Clovis, New Mexico

1100 Words

tho'MAS N. PENDERGRASS

917 Mitchell Street

CLOVIS FIRST NEWSBOY

"I was born in 1900 near Weed, New Mexico, not very far from Artesia. It is very mountainous there and the New Mexico Boy Scouts' summer camp is located nere Weed. We lived there and at Artesia until [1906?], when Dad moved to Texico. Early in 1907, he decided to move to Clovis which had been made the division point of the Santa Fe railroad. It was a shack town then and it took Dad three months to get us a house built so we could move there. C18 - N. Mex.

The first week I was in Clovis I couldn't find any boys of my age to play with. One day I was away down the railroad track where the underpass is now at the end of Prince Street in the southeastern part of town, and I met a boy. We had a fight. I do not what we fought about or which one got licked, but we just quit I suppose. He asked me if I wanted to ride.

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"Where is your horse?" I asked. "There," he said, and pointed to an old red bull with a rope on his head. The boy who's name was Pat, threw the rope reins over the bull's head and we crawled on. The rope was fixed just like a bridle, and Pat guided Pete, the bull, just like you would a horse. Pete was very old and gentle. We rode him all over the town, and later we found some more boys and they got on behind me. When Pete got tired, he would just start out in a jog trot and off would come the boys, for it was the 2 roughest riding I ever tried to make. Pete was very old and I don't remember how long he lived but we missed him very much. A traveling photographer made pictures of us boys and Old Pete, and I suppose he sold a tho'usand of the postcards. I would be glad to got one, but no one in Clovis has a postcard picture of Old Pete.

The first nickles I ever made was by selling the Fort Worth Record, Fort Worth, Texas paper. The agency was in the hands of a man who ran a pool hall. I went down to get his papers one morning, and the boys told me that the old man was found dead in bed. The employees refused to tell me what to do, so I just took the papers and sold them. Dad was running a confectionery and he helped me take over the agency. I also sold the Saturday Evening Post and the Ladies Home Journal. At one time I had 300 subscriptions of both of these paper or magazines, and peddled them all myself. Dad then put in the news stand and I still delivered papers. I am sure that I have the honor of being the FIRST NEWSBOY IN CLOVIS? and I am proud of it. I think that a boy should always have something to do.

"Yes, I had lots of fun. The ol' marble grounds were where the Hotel Clovis now stands. All the little tikes in town would congregate [?] there and play marbles. Sometimes some one would want me to do something, and if we they did not see me around they would come to the marble grounds and call `Snooks' and I would have to run for I knew it was some 'kind of business."

One day a man came in town and wanted to get some one to 3 collect for him. I guess we had been here several years, for he was a club subscription agent, a "man who was paying his way thro'ugh college," and he wanted some one to help him collect. [He?] came

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to the marbles grounds and called "Snooks," and so I went to see what he wanted. I did not like it much when I found he was horning' in on my [?] business, but I went with him and told him where his subscribers lived. Sometime we would have to go up the same street twice, and I said, "Give me your list and I will collect 'em for you." He let me have the list and I soon showed him that I knew the town. At first, he was afraid to let me do the collecting for him, but I never failed to make of the people come across, so he wanted me to go in with him. I told him that "selling magazines and papers was my business also." He [?] sure did look funny about it.

My dad was too busy to collect, so he sent my sister out with the bills, but she was so timid, that she would not present them. "Snooks," do you think that you can collect for me?" Dad asked, I said that I would try, so I went out after the bills and collected every one of them. I think that was before the magazine man had me to do work for him. Everybody laughed at me and asked me if I could read. Dad had the bills made out and their names on each slip and I soon learned the names, and of course I know where they lived.

There was lots to amuse a boy in Clovis then. We had an 'ole swimmin' hole," up near where the Athletic Field north of the Junior High school. We had to wade thro'ugh the mud before we c could get to deep water, and when we got out there in the middle 4 was an island. We would stay out there thro'ugh the long hot days and come back with blistered backs, and oh, so tired.

The first hook and ladder fire department was the greatest excitement for me. I would ride on the hose cart to keep the hose from falling off. Many a fire have I gone to riding that cart. I remember when there were several fires right close together, and the men in Clovis tho'ught there was a 'fire bug in town.' Sure, enough there was and what they did to him was a plenty. I think they intended to hang him, but the law took hold of him and he was run out of town.

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A Mr. Jack Lewis used to drive the fire horses, Bob and Bill was the names of the smartest and finest horses that were ever in Clovis. They were always ready to go at the sound of the fire whistle. When the horses were getting too old to be used, they were put in a pasture about two miles, from town. But when they heard that whistle of alarm, they would break thro'ugh any kind of fence and come to town and go right to where the fire was. I do not know whether they are still living or not. Mr. Lewis could drive them thro'ugh the parked cars, and at a run too, and never hit a hub or make a mistake. That has been a long time ago.

I have grown up with this town and many things that interest me have been forgotten by the older people.

I graduated in high school about 1917 and wanted to join the army then, but Dad wouldn't let me. But later when the war got 5 so hot, Dad tried to get in the army and couldn't and he told me that I could go, but the war closed before I got to enlist.

I went to the Military university one year but dad wasn't w well so I had to come home. Dad died early in 1922, and I did not get to go to school much more.

I am now brakeman on the passenger run, from Amarillo to Belon on the 12,910 and am at home on Tuesdays and Sundays.

The roads are in much better condition then when I first began to go on the runs. There was not any ballast on the road bed, and the rails would [???] the train would be derailed.

"I like dogs very much, "he said as a man brought him a dog that had been given to his little boy four or five years old. This [was?] Boston Screw Tail. And he and my boy are inseparable."

Mr. Pendergrass is a very pleasant talker, and he loves the past of Clovis, but he is just as interested in the growth now. But Clovis is his "Old Home Town."

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This is a very scattered sketch of Mr. Pendergrass, but I do not think that any one could be a better booster of his own than this railroad man who started out as a "Newspaper Boy."